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From Culture to Civilization: The IR for the Declining Power

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INTRODUCTION: GLOBAL POLITICS VS. CHINA

China's rise is a major feature of global politics at the beginning of the 21st century that brings up many questions. In the process of going from a position of relative weakness to a position of relative strength, how will rising China and global politics adapt to each other? Will China's rise be a rational process or not? This paper argues that in addition to current international relations theory, historical cases are also useful in answering these questions. In the following discussion four cases are compared; two cases during Emperor Xianfeng's reign and another two under Emperor Guangxu. Emperor Xianfeng considered China as possessing a unique culture which should be separated from alien forces while Emperor Guangxu accepted exchanges with the West and was willing to learn from it. Both emperors similarly faced constraints to their power in implementing their policy though. We have selected two cases for each Emperor to show how each of them acted differently from a position of strength and from a position of weakness. This comparative study provides hints to how the 21st century rising China will adapt to its expansive influence.

China's rise is a major feature of global politics at the beginning of the 21st century. From a position of relative weakness to a position of relative strength, how will China's rise and global politics adapt to each other? Whether or not will China's rise a rational process? In addition to the current international relations theory, historical cases should also be useful in answering these questions. In the following

discussion, two cases during the period under Emperor Xian Feng and another two under Emperor Guangxu are compared. Emperor Xianfeng considered China being a unique culture which should be separated from the alien forces while Emperor Guangxu accepted exchanges with the West and was willing to learn. They similarly faced the constraint of power, though. The rest of the paper will select two cases for each Emperor to show how they acted differently in a position of strength from one of weakness. The comparative studies should provide hints to how China on the rise in the 21st century will adapt to its expansive influence.

Some scholars suggest that China is capable of learning and will merge.¹ Others argue that China will retain its culturally unique approach to foreign policy.² The following analysis tackles the question indirectly by proposing a theme of non-apparent rationality and relationship to bridge the two strings. Four cases from the Qing Dynasty will illustrate how Chinese intellectual and historical resources support both perspectives. These cases show that Chinese foreign policy (CFP) thinking is distinctive and yet also rational. It espouses non-apparent rationality, which refers to the pursuit of long-run benefits achieved through stabilized relationships. Accordingly CFP contains two kinds of international relationships: a civilizational relationship to accommodate or acquire new ways of exchange and a cultural relationship to enforce or protect the perceived uniqueness of China. In order to provide a comprehensive analysis, this article also examines how these two relationships play out when China is weak.

¹ For example, Allen Carlson, *Unifying China, Integrating with the World: Securing Chinese Sovereignty in the Reform Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008).

² For example, Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (New York: The Penguin Press., 2009); David Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

Recently Chinese scholars have also contributed cultural perspectives on China's foreign policy style. One perspective holds that the Chinese worldview is generally tolerant towards the coexistence of other nations and values.³ This partly Daoism-inspired view welcomes voluntary contact of all kinds. The other perspective asserts that China's past endorses a hierarchical order as a ready substitute for equal sovereignty.⁴ This view, which partly builds on the Chinese Legalist tradition, alerts members to the estranging forces outside of the hierarchical system. The two views diverge significantly on how they should treat other nations. However, it is necessary to point out that both views embrace no synchronic institutional arrangements or universal rules of conduct prescribed by globalization or IR theorists. They both subscribe to some kind of long-term relationship instead.

In addition to either learning or aversion from alien influences, a third view mediates in between them. This third view is partly Confucianism-inspired and maintains that relational security is an essential element of the Chinese attitude toward other nations. At the same time, however, this contemporary view acknowledges the negotiability of the substance of the relationship.⁵ This last view is similarly based on relationships, and therefore also feels alienated by the short-term character of global politics that is plagued by the self-centric balance of power or balance of interest.

While politics of global governance targets anarchy, the notion of anarchy in the Chinese classic wisdom is consistently referred to as chaos (*luan*), the opposite of

³ Tingyang Zhao, "A Political World Philosophy in Terms of All-Under-Heaven (Tian-xia)," *Diogenes* Vol. 56, No.1 (February 2009), pp. 5–18; Tingyang Zhao, "Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept 'All-under-Heaven' (Tian-xia)," *Social Identities* Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 2006), pp. 29–41.

⁴ Xuetong Yan, *Ancient Chinese Thought and Modern Chinese Power*, ed. Daniel Bell and Zhe Sun, trans. Edmund Ryden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Jeremy Paltiel, "Constructing Global Order with Chinese Characteristics: Yan Xuetong and the Pre-Qin Response to International Anarchy," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* Vol. 4, No. 4 (2011), pp. 375–403.

⁵ Qin Yaqin. "Rule, Rules, and Relations: Towards a Synthetic Approach to Governance," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* Vol. 4, No. 2 (2011), pp 117-145.

which is governability (*zhi*). The idea of governability embraces local spontaneity as opposed to external intervention, so whatever way that makes the domain governable again is acceptable. It submits to the cyclical historiography of chaos and governability and anticipates the ultimate restoration of harmony due in the long run. The teachings of Confucius himself advise self-disciplining and escape during periods of chaos, thereby adopting a temporal historiography of waiting. The temporal approach is to manage anarchy via stabilized relationships so that governability will return in the long run. In contrast, the opposite of anarchy in IR discourse is sovereignty, sometimes coupled with liberalism, to engulf IR in a spatial historiography of synchronization. Therefore, IR theorization is typically aimed at tackling or preempting disturbance in the immediate run.

Accordingly, the global politics perspective shall necessarily ask China, “How long will it take to restore which relationship?” As to “how long,” if one believes that the world will persist permanently, no calculation can be long-term enough. This belief makes any calculation trivial because, in the extreme long run, stable relationships shall always pay off. The question of “how long” is a matter of conventional belief which reflects an attitude towards time. Stabilized relationships are a convenient and reassuring indicator of long-term national interests. Accordingly, reliance on stabilized relationships certainly would be the preferred approach. The purpose of CFP embedded in relational security yields a disposition for compromise to repair relationships or for confrontation in order to resist changes even though the disposition runs counter to China’s apparent short-term national interests.

The question left for us to determine is that of what kind of stable relationship Chinese culture prescribes, if it is not accounted for by calculable interests. The two

Chinese perspectives provide a clue. The policy preference for estrangement, which is aimed at protecting or enforcing perceived Chinese uniqueness, shall be called the cultural approach.⁶ The alternative approach involves the preparation of foreign policy for relationality, mutuality, embeddedness, and contextuality, so that China can accommodate to or acquire new ways of interaction.⁷ The latter approach reflects Chinese worldviews as exemplified by the values of harmony, group orientation and guanxi culture. However, its purpose is not to assert China's distinction, but rather to transcend it in a variety of ways. This second approach shall be called the civilizational approach.

PURPOSE: THE CIVILIZATIONAL VS. CULTURAL APPROACH

The cultural approach reflects the idea that the Chinese stick with one another because they have inherited the same culture. As such, Chinese culture will continue to prosper in the future. To become Chinese, one grows up and lives amongst other Chinese and one internalizes one's inherited, shared consciousness. It is rather unlikely for an alien to become Chinese under the cultural approach whereby Chinese people and Chinese culture mutually define each other. When the CFP makers take the cultural approach, the purpose is to maintain the perception of Chinese uniqueness by resisting foreign influences or enforcing the Chinese way barbarians during interaction with foreign nations. The cultural purpose to protect or enforce one's own style shall lead to tense relationships with other nations.

The civilizational approach may accommodate to or even acquire foreign ways,

⁶ For a discussion on the cultural approach, see Peter Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Chih-yu Shih, *The Spirit of Chinese Foreign Policy: A Psychocultural View* (London: Macmillan, 1990).

⁷ For example, William Callahan, *Contingent States: Greater China and Transnational Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

including institutions, technology, language, cuisine, religion, and so on. The civilizational approach is thus premised upon flexible kinship, whether real or imagined. With civilizational openness, the CFP purpose is to interact by means of either preaching or learning, or to preach and learn through interaction. The civilizational purpose of CFP leads to more relaxed international relationships.

And yet, the same purpose can yield different orientations in accordance with perceived China's relative power. Perceived strength leads to enforcement policies -- a condition we call "Empire." In contrast, perceived weakness in China's relative power in combination with cultural CFP produces policies of resistance and protection, resulting in a condition we call "Great-Wall." On the other hand, in a relatively powerful position, CFP that adopts the civilizational approach accommodates coexisting varieties and multiculturalism, i.e. a condition of "Tianxia," which is also ready to actively acquire new ways in the condition of "Sinification", when suffering a relatively powerless position.⁸

Table 1. about here

Empire

A familiar cultural scheme in the Chinese worldview is to divide the world into the civilized and the barbarian. The Confucian saying—*yan yi xia zhi fang* (adhering to the defense of Chinese from barbarians)—reminds one of the cultural self-centrism in Chinese political tradition. The Great Wall symbolizes the estranging state of mind. When the CFP makers perceive China is stronger, China shall enforce the ritual that

⁸ For more discussion, see Peter Van Ness, "Civilizer States: America and China in the Modern World," unpublished paper (Denver, 1985); William Callahan, *China: Pessoptimist Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Chih-yu Shih, *The Spirit of Chinese Foreign Policy: A Psychocultural View* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Andrew Nation and Robert Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998).

ensures its role at the top of the hierarchy through either reward or punishment. As a Chinese growing up and living in a foreign land or ethnic groups living on the social and territorial margins, one is faced with two choices: to believe that one is like-Chinese, or to believe that one needs to be converted or re-converted to Chinese culture. Perceived barbarians are required to adopt Chinese practices before receiving preferential treatments. Punishment is applied to uncooperative barbarians who are perceived to violate the Chinese customs or value.

History has witnessed the practice of granting much more in return to a neighbor or visitor that pays tribute. This obvious lack of rationality has led to the establishment of an order in which the Chinese self-identity of being at the center of the world would not be challenged, while at the same time this particular order legitimizes extraction and unlimited access to resources in the time of crisis, i.e. the non-apparent and incalculable benefits of hedging.

Great Wall

A perceived weak China is in the danger of intrusion by barbarians. China's distinctive order is in such jeopardy that resistance/exclusion is called for. The predicament is that China's weakness does not allow confident resistance to the effect that confrontation could be merely symbolic rather than substantial. Symbolic confrontation could occur in many modes. For example, it could be a well-planned sequence of quick reactions and disengagement. It could also be the execution of internal opponents who advise compromise. Other possibilities include a claim of future revenge, a desperate but useless act of self-sacrifice in order to shame the arriving barbarians, a strong act of self-sacrifice aimed at intimidating the arriving barbarians, or over-reaction to perceived, but unintended, disrespect with the result of

overthrowing already established consensus or reconciliation.

The purpose of resistance is to make a nationalist statement to the intruding barbarians that weakness does not keep China from asserting uniqueness. How much benefit these often apparently ineffective responses to the perceived as well as real dangers can accrue is dubious since it is neither measurable nor guaranteed. Nevertheless, the quest for acknowledged uniqueness could prevail over a concession policy even though concession would be sure to reduce the apparent loss. In any case, adherence to such a symbolic distinction reinforces the losing side's self-awareness and thus preserves the drive for restoration in the long run.

Tianxia

The drive for assimilation or exclusion of barbarians decreases if the attitudinal orientation of CFP makers is toward learning, interaction or preaching. China is allegedly at the top of an open hierarchy. CFP makers would want to accommodate and even promote diversity and divergence in the periphery by acquiescing to their petty maneuvers as if contradiction is natural and intrinsic to the human world which a selfless Chinese leadership shall exclusively represent. To some extent, contradiction is even desired, for such contradiction or alienation from Chinese values indirectly attests to unimposing Chinese leadership. The major motivation is to demonstrate China's all-embracing capacity to accommodate all possibilities in the spirit of a Confucian wish, hence all-under-heaven, i.e. Tianxia.

What would appear to be concessional policy in accordance with apparent national interest is a conscious choice for the sake of harmony or the transcendence of confrontation. This civilized attitude ensures that China would never be in anyone

else' way so that Chinese leadership is always welcome. At least, it would be unnecessary to substitute an alternative for Chinese leadership which preaches without any demand for synchronization.

Sinification

Nationalist resistance is not the only CFP solution to the crisis of intrusion or containment by the West. Facing unfriendly international relations under the circumstance of perceived weakness, another CFP option is to cut across the mutually estranged national identities. Reconnection or reactivated existing connections between China and its opponents should be an intuitive reaction seen before in Chinese history. One popular method of reconnection in Chinese history is to acquire a mutual identity through marriage or voluntary hostage. In addition to social reconnection that obscures national boundaries in order for China to escape from being the target of containment, there is civilizational reconnection. This option is not available unless the CFP makers willingly engage favorably with international means and norms.

The civilizational CFP does not worry about losing the core cultural values that define China. Now that China is so aware of its limitation that it is prepared to learn from other civilizations and comply with their practices, the CFP could appear losing jurisdiction, control, or dignity when barbarian advisors are practically admired or barbarian standards are strictly observed. Nevertheless, the civilizational purpose is to catch up with the major powers on their criteria or with their methods.

CASE STUDIES: SHORT VS. LONG-TERM

The following four cases use Emperor Xianfeng as a representative example of

the cultural approach and Emperor Guangxu as one of the civilizational approach. These cases, arranged chronologically, are like cases, in the Western historians' eyes, because they reflect China's systematic resistance to Western progressive influences. In reality, the nineteenth-century CFP decision makers acted differently in these four cases. The issue at hand in the former two cases was that the Chinese side refused to abide by the treaty rights of the barbarian to interact with the Chinese. The latter two cases reflect a shared concessional purpose and a similar strategy of intermingling to accommodate challenges or obscure differences in order to restore or establish a relationship. This article tries to explicate these four cases in terms of the CFP quest for non-apparent national/rational interests qua relational propriety. Culture and rationality are not opposite. Nevertheless, rational decisions are not automatic and self-apparent. Rather, they require leaders to make culturally sensible choices.

Empire: The First War of Anglo-French Alliance

A highly self-regarded China, combined with a cultural CFP, would be rigid and adamant toward barbarians. The outbreak of the Arrow War in 1858, out of the motive to refute recalcitrant barbarians from a lofty position, led to the most serious hostile Sino-Western engagement in the nineteenth century. Owing to this local war in Canton, the British and French alliance went into Beijing and razed the Summer Palace in Peking in 1860. In the history of the Qing Empire, this was the first time the capital city was taken by foreigners and the first time the Emperor abandoned his minister and his palace there. Given the gravity of these events, there seems to be an absolute lack of rationality on behalf of China's foreign policymakers.

Both the Chinese and the Western accounts treat Liang-Kwang Viceroy Yeh Ming-chen (1809-1859) as a critical figure. Yeh 'belonged to the last generation of

Chinese imperial civil servants to grow up in a world on which Western influence had not yet begun to impinge'.⁹ Contemporary and current Western scholars find it difficult to rationalize Yeh's seemingly ridiculous behavior. First, Yeh mobilized local militia to resist the British from entering Canton as was allowed by the treaty. He rejected requests by foreign representatives to meet except only agreeing once to see Sir John Bowring (1792-1872, Governor-General of Hong Kong 1854-1859) in a trade house with the purpose of humiliating Bowring, who emphatically refused. When his troops arrested some crew of a Chinese-owned and Chinese-manned vessel called the *Arrow* and pulled down the British Ensign,¹⁰ the Acting Consul of Britain, Henry Parkes (1808-1881) understood this as yet another violation of the Treaty of Nanking.¹¹ He ordered an attack. However, Yeh's militia was able to hold back the enemy, and forced them into retreat. In retaliation, the triumphant Yeh went on to cut the supplies to the British in Hong Kong, forcing them all out to the sea.

However, financial support for the militia, which Yeh solicited from those who used to profit from foreign trade, ceased due to the closing of business. When the British came back with reinforcements, Yeh tried in vain to agitate the people of Canton, in substitution for the militia, to rise up to their own defense. He could only prepare himself for capture at his desk with foods as he declined any foods from Britain. After he was transferred to Calcutta, his foods ran out and he ended his life in a 17-day hunger-strike. Judging from the foresaid short description, Yeh was an outdated traditional hardliner and did not have a sound knowledge of foreign affairs. He can be comprehended better, however, if cultural CFP is applied to this case.

⁹ G. F. Hudson, 'Foreword', in J. Y. Wong, *Yeh Ming-chen: Viceroy of Liang Kuang (1852-1858)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), XV.

¹⁰ D. Hurd, *The Arrow War: An Anglo-Chinese Confusion, 1856-1860* (London: Collins, 1967), p. 12.

¹¹ Article II, Treaty of Nanking, 1842. Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, *Treaties, Conventions, Etc., between China and Foreign States* (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1917), 2nd edition, Volume I, p. 352.

In the eyes of Yeh, the barbarians and the Chinese could not interact via written arrangement. The ship was absolutely still domestic as a British Ensign cannot change the fact that the *Arrow* was Chinese-owned and Chinese-manned. He similarly relied on a Chinese-manned city to deny the British from entry. Before he received Yeh's official reply, Parkes had already sent a dispatch to Sir John Bowring and Commander George Elliot (1784-1863) for naval support.¹² However, Yeh did not understand why Bowring used the *Arrow* incident to threaten him that the British must enter Canton city as these two matters were totally irrelevant. The only meaningful string connecting both events was that the Chinese and the barbarians had to remain separated. In the eyes of Bowring and Parkes, these two issues were on the contrary the same thing because they were both regulated by the Treaty of Nanking.

It was very unlikely that Yeh and Bowring and Parkes could reach any consensus as separation and exchange are two opposite purposes of each of them. A war seemed inevitable. The war was conducive to a typical cultural CFP in Yeh's resolute position that demonstrated, consolidated and capitalized on the presumed cultural difference:

...[Yeh] restrained his troops from even firing on the enemy in defense when the latter tried to capture forts on the outskirts of the city, so as to let the Cantonese see with their own eyes that the British were the aggressors. By so doing, he hoped to achieve two aims: first, that the people of Canton would be provoked and would stand to the enemy, who he thought, would realize that they had by mistake antagonized the people and would retreat; second, if the British nevertheless insisted on a military solution, the alienated people of Canton would fully back up their government in the war

¹² FO 228.213, Parkes to Bowring and Elliot Despatch No. 150, 8 October 1856.

effort.¹³

A villain in most British foreign documents, Yeh's determination to revoking the agreed entry of the barbarians practically made the wall of Canton into a mini Great Wall, which he had mistakenly thought he could have defended with the support of Cantonese' anti-foreignism and even reinforced this emotion.¹⁴

Imagine that Yeh had had the level of power that he had thought he had, would not his approach have been unlike Deng Xiaoping's decision in 1982 to force Hong Kong's return from Margaret Thatcher, widely considered shrewd by Deng's contemporaries? Yeh's lofty style of waiting for the enemy to fire the first shot has also been the standard CFP in the twentieth-first century as reiterated in the contemporary national defense principle of "tit for tat" (*or ren bu fan wo wo bu fan ren, ren ruo fan wo wo bi fan ren*). At most, Yeh could be faulted for miscalculating the British strength, but this is by no means lacking rationality. In fact, his purpose and his strategy were consistent. To say the least, Yeh's stylistic use of anti-foreign sentiment was the first of its kind in Chinese modern history. Note that anti-foreign sentiment has continued to gird the quest for national unity to some extent in the 21st century.

Great Wall: The Second War of Anglo-French Alliance

The Arrow War and the subsequent First War of the Anglo-French Alliance ought to have cleansed the myth that China had the upper hand. That said, a confrontational attitude could nevertheless persist even with foreseeable loss, as long as the Emperor adopted the cultural approach. This was the case indeed after the

¹³ Wong, *Yeh Ming-chen*, p. 171.

¹⁴ Wong, *Yeh Ming-chen*, p. 167.

signing of the Treaty of Tianjin in 1858. The Treaty temporarily ended the war, but not necessarily the cultural approach, even though China obviously could no longer sustain it.

The atmosphere of the time that surrounded the Xianfeng Emperor (1831-1861) continued to be that the Chinese and the barbarians had to separate. This led him to adopt an uncompromising cultural CFP despite the fact that China's weakness he had witnessed in person during the Opium War would have suggested to opt for making concessions. The Emperor continued to believe that the requested stationing of barbarians' delegations in Beijing was not acceptable, nor the place to carry out their intended exchange of rectifications to be in Beijing.¹⁵ As history unfolded, two incidents virtually bound the Emperor to a confrontational approach. One was the destruction of British warships at Taku and the other was the detention of Henry Parke. During and after these incidents, the cultural rationality to assert a righteous order prevailed over the immediate battle assessment. This, as we will now demonstrate, was a deliberate choice of the Emperor's rather than ignorance out of insanity.

The first defeat China suffered at the Taku garrison in 1858 again disclosed the weakness of the gate of the Celestial Court. The Xianfeng Emperor instructed Mongolian cavalry general Sengge Linchin (1811-1865) to enhance the defense of the Taku forts and dispatched thousands of soldiers there.¹⁶ Sengge Linchin's response was adamant and enthusiastic, ultimately resulting in an irrevocable event. He first reported to the Emperor that if the representatives insisted to enter Peking, 'we would be forced to deter them with our military power. The only solution will be

¹⁵ Emperor Xianfeng to Grand Councillors, 25 March 1859, XF YWSM, Vol. IV, p. 1329.

¹⁶ Emperor Xianfeng to Grand Councillors, 9 March 1859, XF YWSM, Vol. IV, p. 1304.

to encourage the soldiers and bombard their ships in order to express the Celestial Court's justice and cease their demonic aggression.'¹⁷

When they anchored at the Taku garrison in June 1859, the British and French plenipotentiaries did not expect any engagement. As none of them had had any military preparations, the British lost 89 lives with additional 345 wounded from bombardments.¹⁸ The loss and retreat inflamed the feud between China and Britain. In the fury of unexpected defeat and the insult of diplomatic failure, the Anglo-French forces came back with full preparations for war. The battle only lasted for seven days.¹⁹ The gate of the Celestial Court was opened by force and they thought the war was over.²⁰

The bombardment in June 1859 was a political statement on the proper Chinese-barbarian relationship rather than execution of war policy. The Emperor had no such policy. The following event would appear even more absurd. After the third battle of Taku, Sengge Linchin retreated to Tungchow, which was 8 kilometers away from the Forbidden City.²¹ While Prince Yi Tsai Yuen (1819-1861) and Lord Elgin (James Bruce, 1811-1863) were communicating, Parkes showed up again, accompanied by Thomas Wade (1818-1895). In the eyes of Westerners, 'Parkes and Wade came back thoroughly satisfied, and completely deceived.'²² The reason why the British thought they were deceived is that Parkes was put in custody by Sengge Linchin.²³ The emperor had not intended the episode, however. It was first that Sengge Linchin wanted to hold Parkes responsible for all problems in 1858 and

¹⁷ Sengge Linchin to Emperor Xianfeng, 2 April 1859, XF YWSM, Vol. IV, p. 1337.

¹⁸ Hurd, *The Arrow War*, p. 183.

¹⁹ Hurd, *The Arrow War*, pp. 214-215.

²⁰ Hurd, *The Arrow War*, p. 216.

²¹ Sengge Linchin to Emperor Xianfeng, 24 August 1860, XF YWSM, Vol. VI, p. 2138.

²² S. Lane-Poole, *Sir Harry Parkes in China* (London: Methuen & Co., 1901), p. 232.

²³ Sengge Linchin to Emperor Xianfeng, 18 September 1860, XF YWSM, Vol. VII, p. 2322.

afterwards.²⁴ The actual order of arrest was given by Prince Yi when his suggestions were declined outright by Parkes.²⁵ When informed of the arrest, Prince Yi stated that ‘...the Anglo-French forces have no strategist and the Chinese troops should be able to defeat them easily.’²⁶ The capture of Parkes meant this particular war could not be ended easily.

The Xianfeng Emperor was unsure if he should release Parkes as his court was full of excitement. After all, the emperor was ultimately accountable for *yan yi xia zhi fang*. Could he act less concerned over the celestial order than the dangers of war? In fact, for millennia, Confucianism had cherished the virtue of sacrifice more than that of life when facing defeat. The virtue of sacrifice presumably ensured that national revival would eventually succeed and the barbarians would be defeated with voluntary sacrifice of generations after generations. No emperor should refuse being such a model facing the approaching barbarians. Under this rationale, his court officials caught him in a dilemma with regard to Parkes’ case. In fact, the Emperor appeared more and more determined as the opportunity to hold off the barbarians from intruding the Forbidden City was decreasing. He then declared that he would give up peace as long as the approaching barbarians insisted to hand over the treaty to him in person.

The possibility of resuming cultural separation and punishing the barbarians was so attractive that almost all court ministers suggested the Emperor execute Parkes as they considered him as a prisoner of war. These ministers proposed hundreds of

²⁴ H. Loch, *Personal narrative of Occurrences during Lord Elgin’s Second Embassy to China in 1860* (London: John Murray, 1900), p. 98.

²⁵ Prince Yi to Emperor Xianfeng, 17 September 1860, XF YWSM, Vol. VII, p. 2319.

²⁶ Emperor Xianfeng to Grand Councilors, 17 September 1860, XF YWSM, Vol. VII, p. 2321.

useless tactics to him only to the effect of reproducing the principle of *yan yi xia zhi fang*. For instance, a prosecutor of Shanxi Province argued that ‘our soldiers should attack the foreign troops in the evening because they cannot see in the evening and they sleep like pigs. Our cavalries are superior to their cavalries because foreigners do not know how to ride horses. We should set up traps because foreigners’ cannot bend their knees...’²⁷

In this xenophobic atmosphere, the Emperor was actually considering escaping. For an immediate solution, he could have either accepted the Alliance to come to Beijing or run away without further fighting. In reality, he chose neither. Apparently, he resigned to fighting a hopeless war. This was unlike Yeh Minchen who once believed that he stood a good chance. Nevertheless, this again suggests that the purpose was more important than the concern for security in determining the immediate CFP. The Emperor was seemingly more culpable than Yeh since he could anticipate the result better than Yeh. The result was actually worse than he had anticipated. In fact, the signing of the Treaty of Peking in 1860 resulted in a heavier cost than it would have without confrontation – the summer palace was razed, the Emperor abandoned the imperial capital, and the Emperor never returned to the capital. But most importantly, China had to admit that the Chinese side’s reckless actions were the cause of this war.²⁸

In 1865, the Inspector-General of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service of China, Robert Hart (1835-1911), submitted his “A Bystander’s Viewpoints” to the Zongli Yamen in 1865. He felt that confrontation was irrational, especially for an

²⁷ Zhu Chao to Emperor Xianfeng, 21 September 1860, XF YWSM, Vol. VII, p. 2348

²⁸ Article I, Treaty of Peking, 1860. See, *Treaties, Conventions, Etc., between China and Foreign States*, Vol. I, p. 433.

obviously weaker party.²⁹

However, following Hart could not be rational from the cultural CFP point of view. All these calculable infringements that already happened would not be considered infringements by the barbarians in the future if China would expediently accept them in order to stop the Alliance forces. Such compliance would be tantamount to inviting other barbarian powers to follow suit. The Emperor was also conscious of the shame that a treaty signed under pressure could create for him. The cultural purpose is embedded in the assumption that China and the barbarians had to remain estranged in order for the Xianfeng Emperor to continue reproducing estrangement. Unfortunately for them, the unavailing relational security left both the surprised Yeh Ming-chen and subsequently his clear-headed Emperor completely disempowered in what seemed to be a state of insanity.

All this ought to suggest to the coming generations that China succumbed to the treaty rights in 1860 not because China agreed, but because the barbarians imposed them upon China regardless of China's disapproval. The deliberate choice of the Emperor to suffer defeat and immensely exacerbate the cost of war to China, among other similar events, left the Chinese in the future generations a nationalist consciousness of wanting to restore relational propriety. Once the calculation of national interests falls on the imagined horizon of an unlimited future, any cost-beneficial analysis would appear myopic, granted that in the immediate event the Emperor's choice could mean disaster. That is why that the absolute separation of the barbarians from the Emperor, which could have been worth nothing for the moment,

²⁹ Robert Hart, 'Juwai Panguan Lun' (Bystander's Viewpoint), *Tongzhichao Choban Yiwu Shimo* (The Complete Account of the Management of Barbaric Affairs during the Tongzhi Reign) (Peking, 1880). This set was reprinted in 2007 by the China Bookstore: henceforth the citation manner is TZ YWSM, Vol. IV, p. 1668.

was worth everything in the long run.

Tianxia: Concession of the Ryukyu Islands

The relational security embedded in a nominal hierarchy and indicated by the tribunal ritual is essential to the graceful pose of Qing China at the center of all under-heaven. However, any disturbance could destroy China's presumably graceful reign because if China could not control it, the rest of the world could fall into anarchical self-protection. When possible, China ought to appease a disturbed regional order in the hope that its nominal superiority can be maintained. Therefore, maintaining relational security may require concessions and sacrifices in the short run so that a confrontational situation in which China's graceful reign is in jeopardy can be controlled. The thrust of the Tianxia worldview is precisely to demonstrate accommodation rather than asserting distinction. The Qing court's seeming lethargic reaction to Japan's expansionist annexation of Ryukyu for almost two decades illustrated the Tianxia CFP.

In December 1876, the Ryukyu King sent his brother in law, Kōchi Chōjō (1843-1891), to Fujian province, China and asked for the Qing court's help.³⁰ Chōjō submitted a proposal and asked the Min-Zhe (Fujian and Zhejiang) Viceroy to forward this to the Qing court and stated that Japan did not allow Ryukyu to carry out the tribute rituals to China. Ryukyu's tribute was a sensitive issue at the time because the shaky Qing court under the consecutive blows of foreign invasion could nonetheless maintain a posture as the center of the world in Ryukyu's tribute relationship with the Qing Empire.

³⁰ Djing Richang, 'Mindu hejing deng zou liuqiu qianshi rugong riben gengzu gingzhi Banlizhe fu shangyu' (Fujian-Zhejiang Viceroy He Jing and his staff reported that Ryukyu sent the representatives for tribute rituals to China but Japan stopped them), 24 June 1877; Wang Yanwei & Wang Liang eds., *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao* (Diplomatic Materials of the Late Qing) (Peping, 1934), Vol. X, p. 16.

The Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) realized the complexity of the Ryukyu case upon ordering and hearing China's Japan Minister He Ruzhang's (1838-1891) investigation on the situation.³¹ He reported that the reason why Ryukyu was ordered to stop carrying out the tribute rituals to China was that Japan planned to put Ryukyu under its county system. Of course, a Japanese county should neither have diplomatic relation with China nor have tribute obligations to China. The reason that Chōjō did not simply report the detention of his king by Japan was that he suspected, rightly, that China would have an interest in getting involved in direct confrontation with Japan to save his king, if not also for the sake of restoring a nominal relationship.

Cixi did not want to further deteriorate already tense Sino-Japanese relations because China and Japan had already had diplomatic conflicts in Taiwan in 1874. The Ryukyu issue was more sensitive. Since Ryukyu had been China's feudatory for more than a hundred years, the Qing court was supposed to protect Ryukyu from Japan's annexation. But China would gain very little if it could successfully protect Ryukyu, as Ryukyu was relatively small. The only issue left was that the Qing court really needed to perform like a responsible metropolitan state and protect its feudatory.

Minister He Ruzhang proposed three solutions, namely 1) China should send its navy to Ryukyu and force it to continue the tribute rituals, 2) China should plan a joint attack plan against Japan with Ryukyu, or 3) China should ask the foreign powers' diplomatic representatives in Japan to reconcile the dispute.³² All these would have reduced China to no more than another calculative power equal to Japan, which would

³¹ *Qingshilu* (The Qing Emperors' Daily Records), The Records for the Guangxu Emperor, 24 June 1877, Vol. 51, pp. 716-1~716-2.

³² Prince Gong, 'Zongshu zou yifu he ruchang hanshu riben zugeng liuqiu rugong yian xiangji zhuaoban zhe' (Zongli Yamen instructed He Ruzhang how to deal with Japan and Ryukyu), 10 April 1879, *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. XV, p. 11.

have put them in an awkward position. After all, what China ought to have needed was no more than an excuse for inaction so that it remained on top but in no one else' way, as no selfless leadership would ever do.

Regent Prince Gong (1822-1898) asked former US President Ulysses Grant (1822-1885) to reconcile the dispute. In the eyes of Prince Gong, the former US President was, of course, more influential than foreign powers' diplomatic representatives in Japan because Japan was 'opened' by the US navy in the 1860s.³³ Grant was received by the Meiji Emperor and met the Minister of Public Affairs Itō, and then designed a compromise. The northern islands of Ryukyu would be ceded to Japan and put under Kyushu's jurisdiction, and the southern islands of Ryukyu would be ceded to China and put under Taiwan's jurisdiction. The main island, Okinawa, would be returned to the King of Ryukyu and Japan would release the King and his son to re-establish the Ryukyu Kingdom.³⁴

This solution saved face for China, Japan and Ryukyu although Ryukyu obviously suffered from Japan's imperialist attempt. China was ready to take the compromise. However, Japan's representative Takezoe Shinichiro (1842-1917) stated that China could take the southern islands but that Japan would to take the northern islands and Okinawa. The Qing court was obliged to decline this proposal as it did not serve the purpose of nominally continuing the Ryukyu Kingdom.³⁵ Then the Qing

³³ Prince Gong, 'Zongshu zou meiguo qian zongtong zai riben tiaochu liuqiushi yiu banfa zhe' (Zongli Yamen reports that former US President knows how to solve the Ryukyu issue in Japan), 7 July 1879, *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. XVI, p. 19.

³⁴ Prince Gong, 'Zongshu zou meiguo qian zongtong hancheng zai riben shangban qiushi zhe' (Zongli Yamen reports that former US President is discussing the Ryukyu issue in Japan now), 29 September 1879, *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. XVI, p. 21.

³⁵ Prince Gong, 'Zongshu zou riben feimie liuqin yian quanguo qianzong nijia tiaoting shiyi zhongbian qingjian dayuan shangban zhe' (Zongli Yamen reports that the situation that Japan annexed Ryukyu has changed so China should send high-ranking official to interfere into this issue), 26 July 1880, *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. 21, p. 25.

court started to discuss how to finalize this matter, and both expedition and economic embargo were discussed, but none appeared proper or decent.³⁶

The reason why the Qing court was unwilling to take an adamant policy toward Japan was to avoid the image of losing control if Japan was not going to change its policy. This stood in contrast to Xianfeng's decision, which was to demonstrate disapproval despite of losing control. Xianfeng faced a stronger opponent than Cixi, so Cixi had a much better chance of maintaining China's reign over all under-heaven, at least militarily. However, forcing a policy on Japan to restore the Ryukyu Kingdom could backfire if not immediately successful. This was different from her husband's situation in which surrendering would have improperly given the impression of approval. For Cixi, not showing strong disapproval could in effect camouflage the fact that China might have already lost the Ryukyu Kingdom, which it could not care less about if not for the concern over relational propriety.

Cixi's most trustworthy Governors-General and Viceroy started to discuss whether China should ally with Russia or Japan. While the choice between Russia and Japan was strategic, the debate was premised upon China's nominal relationship with Ryukyu in terms of how to legitimately leave the Ryukyu issue in perpetual stagnation. In actuality, the debate was to achieve self-distraction rather than clarification. Ambiguity could cover disturbance so that no urgent act on the Ryukyu issue could be justified. The first court member who took an obvious stance was Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909). Zhang argued as if Ryukyu was no longer the real issue:

China should not be afraid of Japan but be aware of Russia's threat...

³⁶ Ching-Chang Chen discusses Li Hongzhang's anxiety toward any engagement with the presumably subordinate Japan over trivial values in his "The 'Loss' of Ryukyu Revisited: China's No use of Compellence in the Sino-Japanese border Dispute, 1877-1880," pp. 97-100.

The Ryukyu Kingdom is very unlikely to resist Japan's invasion so China should consolidate China's diplomatic relations by improving our trade terms with Japan. If Sino-Japan relations are strong enough, Japan will not lend Russia its military harbor. Thus, we should suspend the decision on the Ryukyu issue and lure Japan with better trade terms in order to persuade Japan not to ally with Russia.³⁷

This argument was challenged by Chih-Li Viceroy Li Hongzhang who argued likewise as if Ryukyu was no longer the real issue:

Even if China were able to ally with Japan, no one could guarantee that Japan will not switch to the Russian side in the future. If Japan returns Okinawa and the southern islands to the Ryukyu Kingdom, we might give some thoughts to the trade terms. But this is very unlikely to happen... Now Japan lends Russia with its military harbor because it is afraid of Russia's naval strength in East Asia. How could China stop this? No matter how good the trade terms are, Japan will ally with Russia anyway. Thus, we should ally with Russia to resist Japan.³⁸

But Nanjing Viceroy Liu Kunyi (1830-1902) had a different opinion. Liu straightforwardly indicated that Ryukyu should not be an issue at all:

Japan has two thousand year history so it is very unlikely that China

³⁷ Zhang Zhidong, 'Zuoshizi zhang zhidong zou Liuqiuan yishen huanji zhe fu shangyu' (Zhang Zhidong reports that the Ryukyu case should be prioritized), 3 November 1880, *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. 24, pp. 1-3.

³⁸ Li Hongzhang, 'Zhidu li hongzhang zou riben yijie liuqiuan qianshe gaiyue zheyi huanyun zhe' (Zhili Viceroy Li Hongzhang reports that Japan attempts to change the trade agreement with China in order to wants to finalize the Ryukyu issue but China has to reconsider Japan's terms), 11 November 1880, Vol. XXIV, p. 3.

can occupy Japan forever. If China sends troops to Japan, there is no guarantee that China can defeat Japan. If Japan is defeated, what we can do? The Ryukyu islands are much closer to Japan. Can we hold there forever? If we cannot, do we want to send troops again and take islands back?³⁹

Together, these three officials reduced the Ryukyu case to an embarrassing condition to the effect that even if China should do something, nothing could be properly done. Disliking this either-or choice between Russia and Japan that would place China against the one or the other, Cixi decided to move beyond alliance building. She had no confidence in any sort of political/diplomatic alliance whatsoever. Seen in the larger strategic picture which illuminated the impossibility of the Ryukyu issue, she set it aside and focused on strengthening China's naval power. A civilizational CFP of accommodation under which China stood in the way of no one else' apparent interests was Cixi's preferred choice. Consequently, both displeasure towards Japan and readiness to incorporate Japan's unfriendly encroachment could coexist. This became and remained to be the thrust CFP until the 21st century.

Note that neither Zhang nor Li favored a strong policy on the Ryukyu issue since no strong policy could guarantee the restoration of the disturbed order without risking failing a test of China's doubtful reign over all under-heaven. They both looked for a longer-term policy that could perhaps wishfully either lure or discipline Japan back to China's world order which should by all means transcend mutually excluded sovereign domains. China's seemingly lack of determination on the Ryukyu issue was, thus, out of a deliberate calculus that reflected a civilizational wish for China to be big

³⁹ Nanjing Viceroy Liu Kunyi, 'Jiangdu liu kunyi zou liuqian yisujie riye yishenzhong tuwei zhe' (Nanjing Viceroy Liu Kunyi reports that the Ryukyu should be ended immediately and China should be very careful when it signs agreement with Japan), 30 November 1880, *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 15-16.

enough to accommodate all those petty maneuvers in the periphery and for China to actually achieve its high status, providing a sufficient period of time to demonstrate its inclusiveness via an enhanced trade relationship. At its minimum, inaction covered the possibly coming loss of a proper relationship and bought time for restoration in the long run. In reality, this imagination that Japan could still find a place in the Chinese world order extended China's eventual falling prey to all major powers almost 20 years later during the Sino-Japanese war in 1894.

Sinification: The Appointment of Hart

Reconnection which is aimed at establishing a reciprocal relationship that can obscure China as a distinctive object of exploitation can be typically sewed through transnational characters. Foreign advisors have played critical roles over centuries in modern China. Take the aforementioned Sir Robert Hart, Inspector-General (IG) of the Inspectorate General of Customs during the Qing Dynasty, who personified the transnational nature of the institution of Customs administration. He started his career in China in 1854 as an Assistant interpreter of Britain's Ningbo Consulate. After 9 years, he was appointed IG by Prince Gong and held this post until he passed away in 1911. In practice, he single-handedly established the modern Customs system for China. It is not an exaggeration to say that Hart Sinicized the institution of international commerce for China. He was the 'most powerful Westerner in China for decades.'⁴⁰

However, his appointment met with surprise among Western observers as well as skepticism from Chinese intellectuals for a whole century. Why would a barbarian be

⁴⁰ Jonathan Spence, *To Chang China: Western Advisers in China* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), p. 128.

allowed such power over vital national interests, especially when Hart endeavored to comment on China's internal issues in his 'Bystander's View'? Zhejiang Governor-General Ma Xinyi (1821-1870) was among the most skeptical as he argued:

Hart suggested that the Foreign Powers could help China to train the troops, but he actually planned to distribute foreign troops in China; the Foreign Powers could help to manufacture machines, but his plot was to put foreigners in China; and trains and rails are the best way to deliver these around China... If we sanction his proposal, foreigners could control the court and sabotage China.⁴¹

Regardless that he was a Briton, Robert Hart was undoubtedly appropriate as he had been involved in acquisition of China's first steamer fleet, namely the Flotilla project in 1861,⁴² although Hart had not been appointed to the IG yet. This project turned out to be a failure, but the Ryukyu issue reminded the Qing government of the importance of naval power for China. After eighteen years of peace, China was interested in more powerful battleships rather than flotillas. However, when Hart showed the provincial leaders 'big-gun gunboats' while being considered as Chief Inspector of Coastal Guards, Jiangsu Governor-General Shen Baozhen (1820-1879) said that the big-gun gunboats 'cannot steam against a head-wind or sea and cannot go fast with wind and tide in favour – further, that they cannot work their guns except in smooth water, and that they are not fit for deep water fighting.'⁴³

⁴¹ Ma Xinyi, 'Fengchen yangren chengdi juwai pangguan lu xinyi lunlue zhi yongyi bingchen ziqiang zhice' (Hart's Purpose of the Bystander's View and How to Self-Strengthen), 27 November 1866.

Quoted in *Jindai zhongguo dui xifang ji lieqian renshi ziliao huibian*, Vol. 2.2, pp. 687-92.

⁴² For the Flotilla project, see, J. Gerson, *Horatio Nelson Lay and Sino-British relations, 1854-1864* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 151-176.

⁴³ Hart to Campbell, 261, Z/8, 11 October 1879, IG in Peking Vol. I, p. 306.

Shen's concerns looked completely ridiculous, but the statement of Xue Fucheng (1838-1894), his father in law's right arm, can reveal their worries easily. 'Robert Hart is insidious and manipulative. Although he enjoys the high-ranking post and high salary, Hart still protects Westerners' interests,' Xue Fuchen criticized:

Hart has already controlled the Customs service and collect tariff tax. If he is put in charge of costal defense, China's navy and revenues will be completely controlled by Hart... After several years, the government will not be able to direct Hart...If the government can offer the same power to the Northern and Southern Ministers and transfer the tariff income levied by Hart to them, what else can the Chinese not achieve?⁴⁴

They successfully blocked Hart's appointment, but modern Chinese history demonstrates that Xue's suggestion had led to disastrous results. The Southern fleet was destroyed by the French navy in 1884 and the Northern one was destroyed by the Japanese navy, in 1895. Even until now, China's coastal defense has not been re-built yet.

The subsequent Boxer Rebellion threw Cixi and Emperor Guangxu (1871-1908) into refuge heading for Xian on 15 August 1900, only a few hours before the Eight-Nation's army ran into the Forbidden City. The City was occupied by the Alliance for over a month, and a hefty indemnity was served to the Imperial palace. Two consecutive defeats testified to the failure of the previous four decades and the wisdom of Hart's critics. In reality, however, a belated rationale of Hart's appointment re-emerged exactly at the moment of the Empress and the Emperor's 'Hunt to the

⁴⁴ Xue Fucheng, 'Shang li boxiang lun hede buyi zongsi haifang shu' (Why Robert Hart should not be put in charge of coastal defence), 10 August 1879, *Yongan wenbian*, Vol. II, pp. 53-55.

West' (*Xishou*), which took almost four months, only to their realization that an intimidating negotiation was awaiting them.

Hart, Prince Qing and Li Hongzhang together manufactured the signing of the Boxer Protocol, reaffirming Fairbank's account of post-1860 practice as a "Manchu-Chinese-Western "synarchy".⁴⁵ Li Hongzhang was aware of his own limitations, so he suggested that "Hart is the best candidate of consultant for negotiations with the powers but he is also a victim of the Boxer rebellion. The Throne has to bestow significant honor upon him in order to convince him to go."⁴⁶ Hart's reaction enacted his role in reconnecting China into a larger relationship:

The situation now is extremely critical. The IG has been given so much honor by the Court so he does not have the heart to watch the situation deteriorating with folded arms.⁴⁷

Cixi immediately consented and decreed that "...Her Majesty gladly appointed Prince Qing and the IG plenipotentiaries for negotiations with the foreign powers."⁴⁸

Hart's task was to convince the foreign powers not to destroy the Manchu empire as they needed to reach a consensus – how to punish China seriously enough to deter it from planning another xenophobic mass movement. Hart began by publishing essays in *The Times*. He first analyzed for his readers why the Boxer Rebellion was still possible after four decades of self-strengthening. He then disputed the idea to

⁴⁵ Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy*, p. 465.

⁴⁶ Li Hongzhang to Cixi, 6 August 1900, *Xixun Dashiji* (The Chronicle of the Travel to the West), Vol. I, pp. 31-33; quoted from Wang Yanwei and Wang Liang eds., *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao* (Diplomatic Materials of the Late Qing) (1934) (Beijing: Shumu Wenxiang Chubanshe, 1987), Vol. IV, pp. 4021-4022.

⁴⁷ Natong to Cixi, 26 August 1900, *Xixun Dashiji*, Vol. I, 10; *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. IV, p. 4010.

⁴⁸ Cixi to Hart, 27 August 1900, *Xixun Dashiji*, Vol. I, 16; *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. IV, p. 4013.

partition China or to install a new dynasty.⁴⁹ His conclusion appealed to the importance of reconnecting China to the rest of the world:

The only practical solution, in the interest of law and order and a speedy restoration of the tranquility that makes life and commercial relations safe and profitable, is first of all to leave the present dynasty where it is and as it is, and let the people of China deal with it themselves when they feel its mandate has expired.⁵⁰

Hart was conferred the title of *Taizi Shaobao* (Guardian of the Heir-Apparent) in the aftermath.⁵¹ He was the only Westerner bestowed with this title. Hart was obviously flattered by this gesture, which was in his eyes equal to the leading reformers of the time Zhang Zhidong and Yuan Shikai (1859-1916), hence his comment: “the Chinese say [of] a big honor.”⁵² Not only did Hart Sinify the Customs institution for China, but he himself enjoyed being Sinified. Synarchy was the quintessential illustration of civilizational CFP for a perceived weak China in need of acquiring Western knowledge

Seven years after the signing of the Boxer Protocol, Robert Hart retired, but the Qing court insisted that he remained the IG, which meant he could come back to China and direct the CMCS whenever he liked. Interestingly, *The Times* commented on his retirement that “if in the conduct of diplomatic negotiations he sometimes chose to consider that primarily he owed a duty to his Chinese associates, we are not

⁴⁹ R. Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim: Essays on the Chinese Questions* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1901), p. 84.

⁵⁰ Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 99

⁵¹ Cixi Edict, 11 December 1901, *Xixun Dashiji*, Vol. XI, 27; *Qingji Waijiao Shiliao*, Vol. IV, p. 4283.

⁵² Hart to Campbell, Z/914, 15 December 1901, Chen Xiafei and Han Rongfang eds., *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs: Confidential Correspondence between Robert Hart and James Duncan Campbell, 1874-1907* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press Beijing, 1990), Vol. III, p. 603.

now disposed to criticise him on that account.”⁵³ He witnessed both the confusions and struggles in CFP and also endeavored to direct it back to the right track.

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION: INTERVENTION VS. NON-INTERVENTION

Robert Hart’s analysis in 1865 concluded:

...Although Westerners were happy that the resulting treaties could settle everything, local authorities usually violated the articles’ contents. Westerners then suspected that this was because their higher ranking officials were not aware of these treaties, but the higher ranking officials did not understand what the Westerners thought. Thus, military engagements occurred again, and this caused that all sorts of treaties would be sent to Beijing.⁵⁴

Indeed, in the 21st century, treaties and various kinds of global legal responsibilities continue to rock the CFP’s position against intervention in certain target states. This reminds us of the fact that China’s “higher ranking officials were not aware of these” responsibilities.

In a nutshell, the Chinese political and cultural preference for stable long-term relationships has led to a different mode of rational thinking. The Chinese national interest calculus is centered on the preservation of stable relationships in order to minimize future uncertainty. To lend credibility to its pursuit of stable relationships, China is ready to compromise on such apparent national interests as territory, power, energy, or economic gain. For the sake of credibility, China is likewise prepared to

⁵³ *The Times*, 23 April 1908.

⁵⁴ Robert Hart, ‘Juwai Pangguan Lun’, TZ YWSM, Vol. IV, pp. 1668.1672-1673.

resort to violence from time to time when necessary, in order to demonstrate its determination to restore what it perceives to be a proper relationship. Neither of these behaviors appears rational from any realist point of view.

Having agreed to participate in global governance, China is painstakingly attempting to stabilize those relationships that it cannot unilaterally control. It is in this regard that China's choice between civilizational and cultural approaches echoes the same challenge facing the Qing court. China's rise today forms a significant contrast to the decline of the Qing dynasty, however. Nevertheless, China's approach to global governance is not consistent with any quest for apparent national interests, be they territorial, economic, strategic, or other mutually agreed values.

The CFP logic mainly involves one of a balance of relationships. At certain junctures, stabilizing relationships can be translated into adapting to both international conditions and the conditions or interests of others in order to reduce their worries about China's intentions. At another time, such a concern for relational security can dictate the demonstration of disapproval and determination in order to preserve legitimacy for future restoration. To maintain existing relationships, China's approach to global governance would stress sovereign integrity to allow local authorities to improve in their own way how to comply with global norms. China would oppose interventionary policy in the name of global governance unless some form of local consent is acquired in advance. For China, global governance would mean global improvement of self-governance.

Table 2. about here

Today, the purpose of CFP is to find a plausible solution to the dilemma between

(1) the quest for stable borders, which adherence to global governance would undermine, and (2) the quest for recognition by the global powers, which resistance to global governance would undermine. Simultaneously, China is trying to change the manner of global intervention in order to reduce the potential impact of intervention on China's relationships with either the global powers or the state at which the intervention is aimed.

The balance of relationships simultaneously concerns relations with global governance powers and with target states. Relationships with target states encourage mutual respect for China's internal preferences as well as for those of the target state. Relationships with global governance powers encourage mutual concessions. The level of global governance testifies to the balance of relationships and can practically change the balance of power calculus. Nevertheless, Chinese global governance practices have to involve the choice between cultural and civilizational purposes.

The above comparative study of the two periods and four cases has demonstrated that diplomatic history proceeds upon undecidability of purpose. Structural constraints in accordance with China's relative power do not automatically lead to the formation of policy. Neither does cultural heritage necessarily determine the orientation of national leaders. Chinese culture requires its leaders to choose, not merely to adhere. Moreover, their choice of purpose can be independent from power concerns. The comparative study therefore demonstrates that neither realism nor culture is sufficient to provide plausible perspectives on the nascent meeting of China's rise and globalization.

Glossary

Chefoo 芝罘	Prince Kung Prince Gong 恭親王
Dagu Taku 大沽	Prince Qing 慶親王
Ding Richang 丁日昌	Prince Yi Tsai Yuen Prince I Zaiyuan 怡親王載垣
Henry Parkes 巴夏禮	Robert Hart 赫德
Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文	Sengelinqin Sengge Linchin 僧格林沁
J. Y. Wong 黃宇和	Shen Baozhen 沈葆楨
Kōchi Chōjō 向德宏	Takezoe Shinichiro 竹添進一郎
Kuei Liang Gui Liang 桂良	Talienwan 大連灣
Li Hongzhang Li Hung-chang 李鴻章	Tangku 塘沽
Liang Kwang Viceroy 兩廣總督	Tongzhi Tung-chih 同治皇帝
Liu Kunyi 劉坤一	Tungchow 通州
Ma Xinyi 馬新貽	Wang Liang 王亮
Min-Zhe Viceroy 閩浙總督	Wang Yanwei 王彥威
Nanjing Viceroy 兩江總督	Xianfeng Hsien-feng 咸豐
Ningbo 寧波	
Pai-tai River 北戴河	
Xue Fucheng 薛福成	
Ye Mingchen Yeh Ming-chen 葉名琛	
Zhang Zhidong Chang Chih-tung 張之洞	
Zhili/Chih-li Viceroy 直隸總督	

Table 1. Conditions and Cases of Chinese Foreign Policy Rationality

CFP Purpose Perceived Power	Cultural	Civilizational
High	Empire	Tianxia
Low	Great Wall	Sinicization

Table 2. Rational and Non-apparent National Interests of the Four Cases

	The First War of Anglo-French Alliance	The Second War of Anglo-French Alliance	Japan's Subjugation of the Ryukyu Kingdom	Negotiation with the Eight-Nation Alliance
Rational Interest	National security	Peace and independence	Power balance and order	Regime security
Rational policy	Abiding by the treaty rights of foreigners to enter Canton	Conceding to the rights of entry to Peking	Confronting Japan through diplomatic and military means	Trusting only the Chinese nationals
CFP Condition	Empire	Great Wall	Tianxia	Sinicization
CFP Purpose	Conversion or exclusion	Resistance or disengagement	Concession or patience	Compliance or relationship
CFP Practice	War	Escape	Inaction	Synarchy
Non-Apparent Rationality	Promote anti-foreignism	Disapprove exchange	Disguise Disharmony	Obscure boundary
Non-Apparent Interest	Control	Restoration	Status quo	Survival
Contemporary disposition	Distinction consciousness	Independence consciousness	Harmony consciousness	Openness consciousness
Global governance	Sovereign integrity	Local consent	Non-intervention	Self-governance